



## Jan. 6 panel wraps work with 'roadmap to justice' for Trump



A video of former President Donald Trump is shown on a screen, as the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds its final meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, Dec. 19, 2022.

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, ERIC TUCKER and FARNOUSH AMIRI

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The House Jan. 6 committee is wrapping up its investigation of the violent 2021 U.S. Capitol insurrection, with lawmakers on Monday declaring that they have assembled a "roadmap to justice" to bring criminal charges against former President Donald Trump and his allies. As they cap one of the most exhaustive and aggressive congressional probes in memory, the panel's seven Democrats and two Republicans are recommending criminal charges against Trump and associates who helped him launch a multifaceted pressure campaign to try to overturn his 2020 election loss.

The committee alleged violations of four criminal statutes by Trump, in both the run-up to the riot and during the insurrection itself, as it recommended the former presi-

dent for prosecution to the Justice Department. The charges recommended by the committee are conspiracy to defraud the United States, obstruction of an official proceeding of Congress, conspiracy to make a false statement and insurrection. While a criminal referral is mostly symbolic, with the Justice Department ultimately deciding whether to prosecute Trump or others, it is a decisive end to a probe that had an almost singular focus from the start. Chairman Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., said the criminal justice system can provide accountability, adding, "We have every confidence that the work of this committee will help provide a roadmap to justice."

Thompson said Trump "broke the faith"

that people have when they cast ballots in a democracy. "He lost the 2020 election

and knew it," Thompson said.

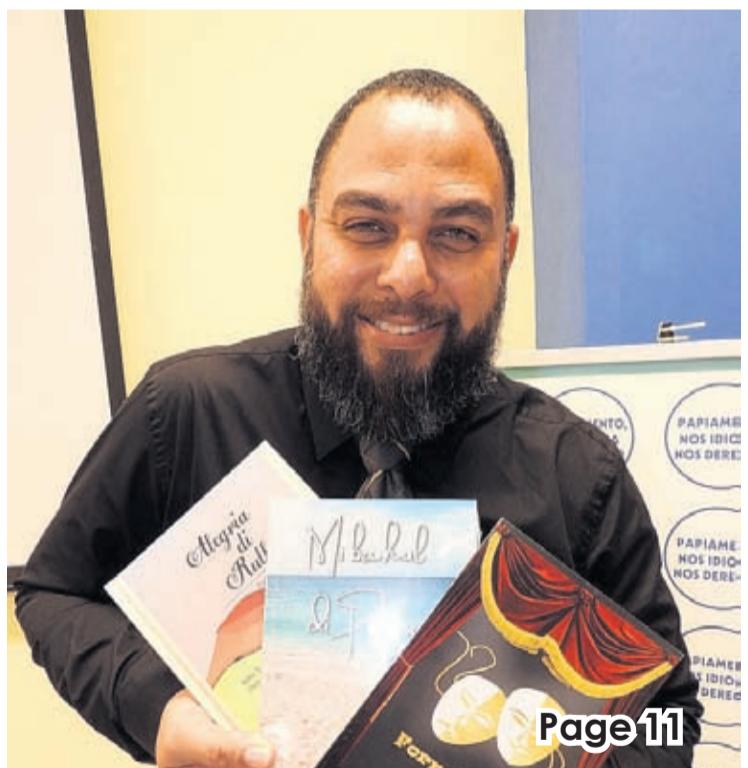
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## Dutch government apologizes for slavery past



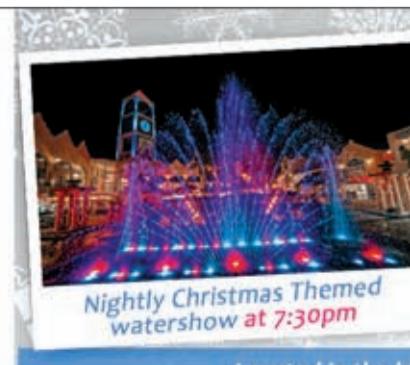
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From left, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., staff counsel Dan George, Rep. Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., Chairman Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., Vice Chair Rep. Liz Cheney, R-Wyo., Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., staff counsel Candyce Phoenix, Rep. Adam Kinzinger, R-Ill., and Rep. Elaine Luria, D-Va., sit on the dais as the House select committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol holds a hearing at the Capitol in Washington, July 12, 2022.

**Associated Press**

### Continued from Front

"But he chose to try to stay in office through a multi-part scheme to overturn the results and block the transfer of power."

Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, the panel's Republican vice chairwoman, said in opening remarks that every president in American history has defended the orderly transfer of power, "except one."

The committee also voted 9-0 to approve its final report, which will include findings, interview transcripts and legislative recommendations. The report is expected to be released in full Wednesday.

The panel, which will dissolve on Jan. 3 with the new Republican-led House, has conducted more than 1,000 interviews, held 10 well-watched public hearings and collected more than a million documents since it launched in July 2021. As it has gathered the massive trove of evidence, the members have become emboldened in declaring that Trump, a Republican, is to blame for the violent attack on the Capitol by his supporters almost two years ago.

After beating their way past police, injuring many of them, the Jan. 6 rioters

stormed the Capitol and interrupted the certification of Democrat Joe Biden's presidential election win, echoing Trump's lies about widespread election fraud and sending lawmakers and others running for their lives. The attack came after weeks of Trump's efforts to overturn his defeat — a campaign that was extensively detailed by the committee in its multiple public hearings, and laid out again by lawmakers on the panel on Monday. Many of Trump's former aides testified about his unprecedented pressure on states, on federal officials and on Vice President Mike Pence to find a way to thwart the popular will. The committee has also described in great detail how Trump riled up the crowd at a rally that morning and then did little to stop his supporters for several hours as he watched the violence unfold on television.

California Rep. Adam Schiff, a Democratic member of the panel, said ahead of the hearing that Trump is someone who "in multiple ways tried to pressure state officials to find votes that didn't exist, this is someone who tried to interfere with a joint session, even inciting a mob to attack the Capitol."

"If that's not criminal, then I don't know what it is," Schiff said. The panel aired some new evidence at the meeting, including a recent interview with longtime Trump aide Hope Hicks. Describing a conversation she had with Trump around that time, she said he told her that no one would care about his legacy if he lost the election.

Hicks told the committee that Trump told her, "The only thing that matters is winning."

While a so-called criminal referral has no real legal standing, it is a forceful statement by the committee and adds to political pressure already on Attorney General Merrick Garland and special counsel Jack Smith, who is conducting an investigation into Jan. 6 and Trump's actions.

"We obviously want to complete the story for the American people," said Rep. Jamie Raskin, D-Md., another member of the committee. "Everybody has come on a journey with us and we want a satisfactory conclusion, such that people feel that Congress has done its job."

The panel was formed in the summer of 2021 after Senate Republicans blocked the formation of

what would have been a bipartisan, independent commission to investigate the insurrection. When that effort failed, the Democratic-controlled House formed an investigative committee of its own.

As the committee was getting started, House Republican leader Kevin McCarthy of California, a Trump ally, decided not to participate after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi rejected some of his appointments. That left an opening for two anti-Trump Republicans in the House — Reps. Liz Cheney of Wyoming and Adam Kinzinger of Illinois — to join seven Democrats, launching an unusually unified panel in the divided Congress.

While the committee's mission was to take a comprehensive accounting of the insurrection and educate the public about what happened, they've also aimed their work at an audience of one: the attorney general. Lawmakers on the panel have openly pressured Garland to investigate Trump's actions, and last month he appointed a special counsel, Smith, to oversee two probes related to Trump, including those related to the insurrection and the presence of classified documents at Trump's Florida estate.

In court documents earlier this year, the committee suggested criminal charges against Trump could include conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstruction of an official proceeding of Congress.

In a "conspiracy to defraud the United States," the committee argues that evidence supports an inference that Trump and his allies "entered into an agreement to defraud the United States" when they disseminated misinformation about election fraud and pressured state and federal officials to assist in that effort. Trump still says he won the election to this day.

The panel also asserts that Trump obstructed an official proceeding, the joint session of Congress in which the Electoral College votes are certified. The committee said Trump either attempted or succeeded at obstructing, influencing or impeding the ceremonial process on Jan. 6 and "did so corruptly" by pressuring Pence to try to overturn the results as he presided over the session. Pence declined to do so.

A criminal referral on the charge of insurrection is a clear effort to hold Trump directly accountable for the rioters who stormed the building. The rarely used insurrection statute criminalizes any effort to incite, engage in or assist a rebellion or insurrection "against the authority of the United States."

The committee may make ethics referrals for five House Republicans — including McCarthy — who ignored congressional subpoenas from the panel.

The panel subpoenaed McCarthy, R-Calif., and Reps. Jim Jordan of Ohio, Scott Perry of Pennsylvania, Andy Biggs of Arizona and Mo Brooks of Alabama. The panel has investigated McCarthy's conversations with Trump the day of the attack and meetings the four other lawmakers had with the White House beforehand as Trump and some of his allies worked to overturn his election defeat. □

## U.S. homeless numbers stay about the same as before pandemic

By JANIE HAR and GEOFF MULVIGHILL  
**Associated Press**

**SAN FRANCISCO (AP)** — President Joe Biden's administration announced Monday that it is ramping up efforts to help house people now sleeping on sidewalks and in tents and cars as a new federal report confirms what's obvious to people in many cities: Homelessness is persisting despite increased local efforts.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said that in federally required tallies taken across the country earlier this year, about 582,000 people were counted as homeless a number that misses some people and does not include those staying with friends or family because they do not have a place of their own. The figure was nearly the same as it was in a survey conducted in early 2020, just before the coronavirus pandemic hit the nation hard. It was up by about 2,000 people an increase of less than 1%.

The administration aims to



**David Hernandez, a 62-year-old homeless man, crawls into his bed made with cardboard boxes in Los Angeles, late Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022.**

**Associated Press**

lower than by 25% by 2025. "My plan offers a roadmap for not only getting people into housing but also ensuring that they have access to the support, services, and income that allow them to thrive," Biden said in a statement. The 2022 All In strategy roadmap made public Monday follows a 2010 effort called Opening

Doors, which was the nation's first comprehensive strategy seeking to prevent and end homelessness. Ann Oliva, CEO of the National Alliance to End Homelessness and a former HUD executive who worked on the first roadmap, said the federal government can influence local action with financial incentives,

streamlined processes and strong policies.

Homelessness among veterans, for example, has plummeted as a result of federal leadership, and the country has also made inroads among youth, she said.

"What they're trying to do here is to show, as a federal government, we are going

to work across agencies, we're going to break down silos, we're going to lead with equity, we are going to talk about upstream prevention and work on those issues," Oliva said.

The federal plan highlights racial and other disparities that have led to inequity in homelessness.

It seeks to expand the supply of affordable housing and improve on ways to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.

Potential steps include a campaign to encourage more landlords to accept government housing vouchers and encourage local governments to build more apartment complexes that are affordable for working families.

The administration also announced a program to have federal agencies work with local officials to reduce unsheltered homelessness in select cities that have not yet been named. Homelessness has become a major political issue, especially in the nation's biggest cities and on the West Coast. □

## FBI: Steep climb in teens targeted by online 'sextortion'

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST  
**Associated Press**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The FBI sounded the alarm Monday about an explosive increase in teenage boys being targeted online and extorted for money after being tricked into sending sexually explicit pictures. At least 3,000 children, mostly teenage boys, have been victims of the schemes that are connected to more than a dozen suicides this year, a scale that U.S. authorities have not seen before, Justice Department officials said. Many think they are chatting online with kids around their own age but are quickly manipulated into sending explicit pictures and then blackmailed for money with threats to release the images, the FBI said. Most victims are between

14 and 17, but kids as young as 10 have been targeted. The FBI said it was issuing the national public safety alert now since kids may be spending more time online as schools close for winter break.

There's been a staggering tenfold increase in reports since last year, and there are likely more victims who never came forward, FBI officials said.

Embarrassment and shame can prevent them from asking for help.

"Victims may feel like there is no way out if it is up to all of us to reassure them that they are not in trouble, there is hope, and they are not alone," said FBI Director Christopher Wray in a statement.

Many of the current wave of schemes are believed to be originating with scammers based in West Afri-

can countries like Nigeria and the Ivory Coast. The suspects typically pose as kids of similar age, often using a girl's profile picture. It happens often on large platforms like Instagram or Facebook, but can also be on gaming or video chats, authorities said.

The alert is meant to thrust the issue into the public spotlight, so kids can feel more comfortable coming forward and adults can help them learn how to spot fake identities and reject anyone asking for explicit images, said Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Polite of the Justice Department's criminal division.

The Department of Homeland Security is also working to track fake accounts back to their source, said Steve Francis, the acting executive director of Homeland Security Investi-



**An FBI seal is seen on a wall on Aug. 10, 2022, in Omaha, Neb.**  
**Associated Press**

gations.

It isn't clear whether federal prosecutors had brought any cases tied to the scams.

The tactics used by those behind the fake accounts are getting more aggressive, and cases have been rising around the world, advocates said.

"This is a growing crisis and we've seen sextortion completely devastate children and families," said Michelle DeLaune, CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. "The best defense against this crime is to talk to your children about what to do if they're targeted online." □

## Third air bag death confirmed, owners urged to get repairs

By TOM KRISHER

AP Auto Writer

**DETROIT (AP)** — Stellantis and U.S. safety regulators have confirmed that an exploding Takata air bag inflator has killed another driver.

The company and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reiterated warnings to owners of 274,000 older Dodge and Chrysler vehicles to stop driving them until faulty inflators are replaced.

Stellantis announced two deaths in November caused by the air bags and said it suspected the inflators caused another. The company formerly known as Fiat Chrysler confirmed the third death early Monday.

Stellantis is urging people to stop driving Dodge Magnum wagons, Dodge Challenger and Charger muscle cars and Chrysler 300 sedans from the 2005 through 2010 model years.

Since 2009, the exploding air bags have killed at least 33 people worldwide, including 24 in the United



This June 25, 2017, photo shows TK Holdings Inc. headquarters in Auburn Hills, Mich. Stellantis and U.S. safety regulators have confirmed that an exploding Takata air bag inflator has killed another driver.

Associated Press

States.

All three deaths this year were in warm-weather U.S. states and happened since April, the company said.

Takata used ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate air bags in a crash. But the chemical can become more volatile over time when exposed to moisture in the air and repeated high temperatures. The explosion can rupture a metal canister and hurl shrapnel into the passenger compartment.

Most of the deaths and about 400 injuries have happened in U.S., but they also have occurred in Australia and Malaysia.

The Stellantis vehicles under the "Do Not Drive" warning were all recalled in 2015, and free repairs have been available since then. Dealers have the parts and the service is free, and Stellantis will provide transportation to get the vehicles to and from a dealership, the company said.

NHTSA said the latest per-

son killed was driving a 2010 Chrysler 300.

"Time is a critical element here because the risk increases with each day these air bag inflators go unreplaced," said Tom McCarthy, global head of safety and regulatory compliance at Stellantis.

The recalls affect vehicles in which the air bag inflators have not been replaced as part of the recall.

NHTSA urged all owners to check to see if their vehicles have an unrepairs Takata air bag recall. Drivers can go to <https://www.safercar.gov/recalls> and key in their 17-digit vehicle identification number to see if they have any open recalls.

"This holiday season, don't let yourself or someone you love be at risk of dying or being seriously injured because of a defective, recalled Takata air bag," said NHTSA Acting Administrator Ann Carlson.

In a statement, Stellantis said the vehicle's owner asked the company about the air bag recall in 2018, but then declined to

schedule service. The company said it sent 114 urgent notices to the owner for the past seven years.

The owner loaned the vehicle to a family member who was killed in a July crash when the inflator blew apart, Stellantis said. The company wouldn't say where the crash occurred, but said it extends its deepest sympathies to the family.

Earlier this month NHTSA said the driver of a 2002 Honda Accord was killed when the driver's air bag inflator ruptured and hurled shrapnel. Honda said the crash occurred on Feb. 22 in Bowling Green, Kentucky.

Potential for the dangerous malfunction led to the largest series of auto recalls in U.S. history, with at least 67 million Takata inflators recalled. The U.S. government says that millions have not been repaired.

About 100 million inflators have been recalled worldwide. The exploding air bags sent Takata Corp. of Japan into bankruptcy. □

## Massachusetts court rules against medically assisted death

By MARK PRATT

Associated Press

The highest court in Massachusetts said in a decision Monday that allowing doctors to prescribe a lethal dose of medication to mentally competent patients with terminal illnesses is not protected by the state constitution.

"Although we recognize

the paramount importance and profound significance of all end-of-life decisions, after careful consideration, we conclude that the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights does not reach so far as to protect physician-assisted suicide," the Supreme Judicial Court wrote in its decision. "We conclude as well that the law

of manslaughter may prohibit physician-assisted suicide, and does so, without offending constitutional protections."

The high court, while noting the sensitive nature of the case, said the ultimate decision on physician-assisted suicide also known as medical aid in dying lies with the state Legislature.

The court said "every one of us is free to vote and encourage our legislators to enact laws, and to craft appropriate procedural safeguards, with respect to one of the only human experiences that will affect us all." The court also drew a distinction between physician-assisted suicide and a patient's voluntary choice to refuse medical treatment or nutrition, saying "whereas withdrawing or withholding medical care is not the primary cause of a patient's death, physician-assisted suicide is."

The suit was originally filed in 2016 by Dr. Roger Kligler, a retired physician with stage 4 prostate cancer, and another doctor who feared prosecution on manslaughter charges if he prescribed end-of-life medications to terminally ill patients.

"People are going to die suffering because of this decision," Kligler, 70, said in a telephone interview from his Cape Cod home.

Kligler, who said he is "not doing well" and in "chronic pain," pledged to continue fighting as long as he is able.

"I will continue urging lawmakers to respect the bodily autonomy of dying Massachusetts residents by passing the End of Life Options Act," he said.

More than a dozen bills to legalize physician-assisted suicide in the state have been introduced in the Legislature but none has ever been put to a vote.

In addition, Massachusetts voters in 2012 rejected a ballot question allowing terminally ill patients to receive a lethal dose of drugs, the court noted.

The office of state Attorney General Maura Healey, which argued the case on behalf of the state, also said the Legislature is the best place to address the issue.

"Our office understands the complexities of end of life care," attorney general's spokesperson Jillian Fennimore said in a statement.

"We are pleased that the Court has affirmed our position that the Legislature is the most appropriate place to have a discussion about this important public policy issue."

AG Healey has said she supports legislative action to allow medical aid in dying, provided it includes sufficient safeguards for both patients and providers." □



Dr. Roger Kligler sits during a hearing in Suffolk Superior Court, Wednesday, March 8, 2017, in Cambridge, Mass.

Associated Press

## EU member countries reach compromise on gas price cap

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN

Associated Press

**BRUSSELS (AP)** — European Union ministers on Monday finalized a long-awaited deal to implement a natural gas price cap that they hope will help households and businesses better weather excessive price surges.

EU member countries failed to overcome their differences at previous emergency meetings, but several EU leaders said last week that fixing a maximum ceiling to pay for gas was likely to be achieved this time. After talks in Brussels on Monday, the Czech presidency of the European Council, which represents member countries, said a deal had been reached.

"We have succeeded in finding an important agreement that will shield citizens from skyrocketing energy prices," said Jozef Sikela, the Czech minister of Industry and Trade, adding that the mechanism will steer the 27-nation clear "from risks to security of supply and financial markets stability." Since it could not find a consensus on the divisive topic, the Czech presidency opted for a "qualified majority" as the voting rule to reach the political agreement. Under EU rules, a qualified



Croatia's Energy Minister Davor Filipovic, left, holds up a t-shirt during a meeting of EU energy ministers in Brussels, Monday, Dec. 19, 2022.

Associated Press

majority requires that 55% of member countries, or 15 out of the 27, vote in favor of a proposal. Such a vote also requires that those nations represent at least 65% of the bloc's population. Under the agreement, the mechanism will kick off if prices exceed 180 euros (\$190) per megawatt hour for three days and if it is 35 euros higher than a reference price for LNG on global markets for the same period. Once triggered, the mechanism will

remain active for at least 20 days. Sikela said the 180 euros limit "is not a cap as such" and that prices can still go above this level if prices on the LNG markets are higher than 145 euros per megawatt hour. "In other words, this is not a fixed cap, but rather a dynamic one," he said. The measure will apply from Feb. 15 next year once formally approved by written procedure. The EU's executive Commission last month proposed a

"safety price ceiling" to kick in if natural gas exceeded 275 euros (\$290) per megawatt hour for two weeks and if it is 58 euros higher than the price of liquefied natural gas on world markets. Such a system might not have averted hikes as high as in August when prices hit nearly 350 euros per megawatt hour on Europe's TTF benchmark but fell below 275 euros within days and was met with derision by many countries including Spain, Belgium,

Greece and Poland, pushing for a lower trigger.

The 27 EU nations have stuck together through nine rounds of sanctions against Russia over the war in Ukraine and energy-saving measures to avoid shortages of the fuel used to generate electricity, heat homes and power factories.

But they were unable until Monday to close a deal on setting the complicated price cap for natural gas. The cap was promised in October as a way to reduce energy bills that have soared during Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"We have proved that the EU is united and will not let anybody use energy as a weapon," Sikela added.

The gas cap issue is a divisive one because of fears that global suppliers would bypass Europe when other buyers offer more money.

"No one, least of all me, has anything against low prices on the gas market. We have to bring gas prices down," German Economy Minister Robert Habeck said upon his arrival at the meeting.

"We just know from previous market interventions that we must be very careful not to want to do something good and trigger something bad." □

## In joint raid, Kurdish forces seize IS militant in Syria

Associated Press

**BEIRUT (AP)** — A Kurdish-led group in Syria said Monday that its fighters alongside U.S. forces have arrested a wanted militant with the Islamic State group that continues to stage attacks in the region.

There are some 900 U.S. troops in Syria supporting Kurdish-led forces in the fight against the militant group.

The Syrian Democratic Forces said its fighters led a raid on the home of an unnamed IS leader on Dec. 16 in the western countryside of Deir el-Zour. The group's

statement claimed the arrested man managed militant cells in the region. The SDF shared a photo purporting to show evidence they confiscated during the raid, including two cellphones, a dozen SIM cards, an internet router, a Syrian-issued identity document and a pistol with three magazines.

The SDF added that this was the fifth such raid over the past two weeks. They have frequently targeted the militants mostly in parts of northeastern Syria under Kurdish control. On Dec. 11, a U.S. helicopter

raid in eastern Syria killed two IS militants.

Syria has been mired in a bloody civil war since 2011 that has drawn in regional and global powers. Syrian President Bashar Assad has mostly regained control of the country, but parts of its north remain under the control of rebels, as well as Turkish and Syrian Kurdish forces.

Turkey strongly opposes the presence of the Syrian Kurdish groups along its border that it blames for attacks within its territory. A series of Turkish airstrikes in the area earlier this month



U.S. military vehicles on a patrol in the countryside near the town of Qamishli, Syria, Sunday, Dec. 4, 2022.

Associated Press

temporarily halted U.S.-Kurdish patrols and raised concerns that cross border tensions would hinder the fight against the Islamic State group.

On Nov. 30, IS announced

that leader Abu al-Hassan al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi was killed in battle. The U.S. said al-Qurayshi was killed in an operation conducted by Syrian rebel forces in the southern city of Daraa. □

# Pakistani Taliban overpower guards, seize police center

By RIAZ KHAN and

MUNIR AHMED

Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP)

— Several Pakistani Taliban detainees overpowered their guards at a counter-terrorism center in north-western Pakistan overnight, snatching police weapons, taking hostages and seizing control of the facility, officials said Monday.

The incident erupted late Sunday and quickly evolved into a standoff. Pakistani officials later confirmed that one counter-terrorism officer was killed during the takeover at the detention center in Bannu, a district in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and part of a former tribal region. Police and the military scrambled to deploy troops and special forces to the area but by Monday evening, some 20 hours later, the hostage crisis was still ongoing. According to officials, at least 30 Taliban fighters were involved in the takeover and there were possibly as many as 10 hostages. The brazen action reflected the government's inability to exercise control over the remote region along the border with Afghanistan. The Pakistani Taliban are a separate group but also allied with the Afghan Taliban, who



**Security officials stand guard on a blocked road leading to a counter-terrorism center where several Pakistani Taliban detainees have taken police officers and others hostage inside the compound, in Bannu, a district in the Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Monday, Dec. 19, 2022.**

seized power in the neighboring country last year as U.S. and NATO troops were in the final stages of their pullout from Afghanistan. Few other details emerged about the takeover, which apparently happened while police were interrogating the Taliban detainees, according to Mohammad Ali Saif, a spokesman for the provincial government.

Saif said the place was surrounded and that officials were trying to negotiate with the hostage-takers. However, he said the "gov-

ernment will not accept any demands of the terrorists" who were being asked by authorities to surrender. Saif earlier said an operation was underway but did not elaborate.

Authorities enlisted the help of several relatives of the Taliban insurgents in the negotiations, several security officials told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to reporters. They said some Pakistani clerics were also in talks with the leadership of the Pakistani Taliban

in neighboring Afghanistan to resolve the hostage crisis in a peaceful manner.

The officials said some soldiers were also among the hostages. There were concerns that the military could storm the facility if negotiations fail. In a video message circulating on social media, the hostage-takers threatened to kill the officers if their safe passage was not arranged.

Mohammad Khurasani, a spokesman for the Pakistani Taliban — also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan or TTP — said some of

Associated Press

the hostage-takers were TTP members who had been detained for years in Bannu.

Khurasani said the TTP fighters were demanding safe passage to North or South Waziristan, areas that were a Taliban stronghold until a wave of military offensives over the past years drove out many of the insurgents. Since then, TTP's top leaders and fighters have been hiding in neighboring Afghanistan though the militants still have relatively free reign in patches of the province. Initially, the hostage-takers demanded in a video message posted on social media that they be airlifted to Afghanistan but Khurasani said that demand had been made by mistake, since the TTP fighters were not aware due to their prolonged detention that the group now "enjoys control in some" parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, near the Afghan border.

The Pakistani Taliban have stepped up attacks on security forces since last month, when they unilaterally ended a months-long cease-fire with the Pakistani government. The violence has strained relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan's Taliban rulers, who had brokered the cease-fire in May. □

# Head of Nobel Prize-winning UN World Food Program to quit

**ROME (AP) —** The executive director of the United Nations World Food Pro-

gram, which won the Nobel Peace Prize two years ago, says he will step down at

the end of a six-year term heading the world's largest humanitarian organization. David Beasley, a Republican, served one term as South Carolina's governor from 1995 to 1999. In a statement Saturday, Beasley said he will exit his role at the conclusion of his term in April 2023.

"Serving in this capacity has been the greatest joy and deepest heartache of my life," Beasley said. "Thanks to the generosity of governments and individuals, we have fed so many millions of people. But the reality is we have not been able to feed them all and the tragedy of extreme hunger in a wealthy world persists."

Beasley was appointed to the U.N. post in 2017 by then-U.S. President Donald Trump, and was recommended for the job by Nikki Haley, another former South Carolina governor. Haley also served as the U.S. ambassador to the U.N. during the Trump administration. Beasley succeeded Ertharin Cousin, an American lawyer and former U.S. ambassador.

The World Food Program won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2020 for fighting hunger and seeking to end its use as "a weapon of war and conflict" at a time when the coronavirus pandemic threatened to exacerbate starvation. In March 2022,

Beasley's term was extended under the Biden administration for an extra year. In September, he said that when he assumed his role in 2017, only 80 million people around the world were headed toward starvation. But climate problems, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine increased that number to 135 million.

The Rome-based World Food Program was established in 1961 at the behest of U.S. President Dwight Eisenhower and has brought aid to multiple crises, including Ethiopia's famine of 1984, the Asian tsunami of 2004 and the Haiti earthquake of 2010. □



**World Food Program Executive Director David Beasley speaks during an interview with The Associated Press at the WFP headquarters in Rome, Nov. 2, 2021.**

Associated Press

# Dutch government apologizes for slavery past



**ORANJESTAD – Yesterday morning, a historical moment for Aruba, the Netherlands and the rest of the kingdom took place. The prime minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, officially apologized in the name of the Dutch Government for slavery in the past of the kingdom. Secretary of State for Justice and Security of the Netherlands, Eric van der Burg was present in Aruba, representing the Dutch government for this special moment.**

Prime Minister Rutte emphasized during his speech that he is aware of the responsibility of the Dutch State in its historical form, and thus he offered apologies for the role of the Netherlands, in the involvement of its government predecessors, to allow, facilitate, promote, perpetuate and benefit from the slave trade.

"Slavery affected the dignity of human beings for many years, slavery by which people were consciously reduced to business merchandise in a repulsive way and were removed from their circle and their family", Rutte said.

He indicated that to begin reparations, an integral package of measures will be offered which will include, among other things, stimulation of knowledge, awareness, recognition, commemoration and better understanding of the effects of slavery to this day. Aside from this, the Cabinet will work on equal oppor-

tunities and fighting racism and discrimination.

"The history that we share leaves us living in the 21st Century amazed and ashamed for acts that took place. History cannot be eliminated with an apology, and this is not the intention of the Cabinet. We cannot change the past, but we can recognize it. The Cabinet sees today's reaction as an important step, not as closure", he indicated.

He added that the Cabinet sees the process of awareness of slavery in the past as a long one, and wants to put a basis for a united future on the way to the year of commemoration of abolition of slavery, which will begin on the 1st of July, 2023.

Rutte pointed out that even though we cannot hear voices from the past, the story that can be made out of historical documentations is not always pretty, and many times it is ugly, painful and directly shameful. This is the case for the role of the Netherlands in the history of slavery.

He continued saying that until 1814, over 600,000 men, women and children out of Africa were enslaved and sent in boats in deplorable conditions to the American continent by Dutch slave traders. In Asia, between 660,000 and one million people – there is no certain number – were trafficked to the areas under

authority of the West Indies Company.

"The numbers are unimaginable. The human suffering that they endured is even more unimaginable. An endless stream of stories that were lived, and testimonies from witnesses show that there was no limit to the arbitrary cruelty of the slave system, and thus there was no limit to injustice and terror", Rutte said.

The Prime Minister referenced the book Anton de Kom, which tells about the treatment and horrible punishments that the slaves had to endure. In the book, the reader can find stories about people who were tortured to death, people who lost their extremities as punishment or were burned with iron on their faces.

"We can read about it, we are aware of it, but even so, the horrible destiny of the person who was turned into a slave is almost unimaginable", he added.

Rutte commented that this history finds, in recent years, more attention through exhibitions, publications and also in public debate. He emphasized that social awareness is taking place and through this there is also a change in mentality, something that is good, appropriate and necessary, because the silence lasted too long, he said.

He said he personally also experienced a change in thought. He said that for a



long time, he thought that it was not possible to take significant responsibility for something that happened so many years ago. For a long time, he said, he thought that the role of the Netherlands in the history of slavery was something of the past, but he was wrong. "Centuries of oppression and exploitation have effects on the present still, in racist stereotypes, in discrimination and exclusion patterns and in social inequality. And to break these patterns we must face the past with honesty", Rutte emphasized.

Dutch Secretary of State for Justice and Security, Van der Burg mentioned in his speech that he is thankful to those that for many years fought to resist slavery. "A lot of our parents are those who suffered because of slavery in the past", he commented.

A very specific point mentioned by Van der Burg was that slavery in Aruba was less intense compared to other countries, but this further emphasized the cruelty of those who enslaved people.

The Secretary of State also indicated that he finds Virginia Dementicia, and Aruban born in slavery, to be admirable and he finds it remarkable that she had the shine and courage to resist her oppression.

Looking forward, the Dutch government is collaborating with Aruba to surpass challenges presented by the history of slavery, by contributing to the digitization of the National Archive in order to improve accessibility to documents that help those interested in finding out more about their past to find the necessary information. □



# LOCAL



## Official launch of DRH's HR portal

**ORANJESTAD - Departamento Recurso Humano (DRH) officially launched the "HR Portal" website on December 14, 2022.**

The HR Portal is a website with information about Land Aruba's human resources policy. Employees of Land Aruba can easily find information there about their legal status and the rules that govern it.

On the website the employees of Land Aruba will

find:

- Information on country regulations and applicable rules on personnel policy; explanation of processes; documents and forms required for submitting a request

Answers to frequently asked questions regarding their legal status.

Topics such as performance management, pay and compensation, AZV-plus and vacancies are available on the website. □

The website will be continuously updated and developed so that it is a valuable source of information for government departments, public employees and the general public.

One can access the website via computer, tablet or phone (smartphone). The visiting address of the website is: <https://hrportaal.drh.gov.aw>.

To keep government personnel informed at all times, a quarterly HR newsletter is produced. Government employees can register for this through the website. The HR newsletter contains the new circulars, legislation and latest developments in the HR field.

The DRH invites all government departments, government employees and stakeholders to visit this website. □

### Laatste HR nieuws

**Pinchos Grill & Bar**

Open: Daily  
From: 5:00pm to 10:00pm  
Tel.: 583-2666  
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ISLAND GRILL • BEACH BAR

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Salon & Spa Services, Souvenirs and more.

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Hungry Piranha | Twist of Flavors | Juan Valdez Café

The Brownstone Ribs & Seafood

Coming Soon: Auntie Anne's Pretzels

## Pay it forward

Oranjestad – One of our lovely visitors shared a wonderful story with us, with a beautiful message of how important, meaningful and wonderful it is to pay kindness forward.

The story comes from Susan and Stephen Haggerty, who wrote to us with the following story.

"Hi! My husband Stephen Haggerty and I Susan Haggerty have been coming to Aruba for 15 years and noticed how many dogs there were roaming and after speaking to people from the island we learned that so many of the dogs were homeless and hungry. My husband and I wanted to do something to help so we started going to Superfoods to buy dog food and asked the local shelters to come to Lacabana to pick the food up. We would spend between 500 and 800.00 on as many bags as our car would allow."

"We would share it on Facebook and our friends



from Boston said they wanted to give us money for the food so we started a little fundraiser and we called it Feed a Dog in Aruba. Last year was the first year we did the fundraiser and we raised \$3,000. This year our goal was to at least get to \$3,000 and we reached \$4,135! We had so many people who gave money from Boston, New England and all over the country contributed to the cause."

"When we got to LaCabaña where we are staying friends who we have met

over the years came up to us and gave us cash for the food. Last year and this year we asked the rescue groups on the island to meet us at Just 4 Pet in Aruba. They supplied us with the bags of food for the last 2 years. A combination of puppy and adult dog food. We dedicated this year's fundraiser to our yellow lab Brady who we lost to cancer at the age of 13 in November."

"We really wanted to pay it forward and we thought what better way than to help the dogs in Aruba where we love to come every December for vacation. We would like to thank the rescue groups in the island who work so hard everyday and Just 4 Pet who supply the food. Our friends Skip and Claire Freeman from Chicago accompanied us this year to help load the food and have helped us each year. Here are some of the pictures from last year and this year." □



## December Specials

**BOWLS**  
NOODLE BAR & TAKE OUT

Monday



Tuesday



Wednesday



Entire bill

Dollar to Florin Noodle Soups

\*applicable for the food, beer and wines

Thursday



Friday



Stir Fry

Izakaya

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Offer valid until December 31, 2022

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Friday - Saturday, 5 PM - 12:00 AM

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Scan



For Directions

# Sea turtle conservation by Turtugaruba Foundation



**ORANJESTAD — Turtugaruba was founded on September 3rd, 2003 by a group of enthusiastic volunteers. Ten years earlier, in 1993, a Sea Turtle Recovery Action Plan (STRAP) was introduced in Aruba and the rest of the Caribbean as an initiative of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Tom Barmes, who was working at DLVV (Department of Agriculture, Husbandry and Fishery) was one of the writers of the STRAP for Aruba, together with Karen Eckert, director of WIDECAST (Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network). This is how sea turtle conservation started on the island following a plan that is still complied with today.**

Tom formed a group of volunteers around him, because nature does not know office hours, like an organization such as DLVV. This group of volunteers used the

name Widecast Aruba and today there are still a few of them active. They first started protecting the Leatherback Sea Turtle nests on Palm Beach and Eagle Beach. This group also investigated which other species of sea turtles use Aruba as their nesting habitat and which beaches are used by them. For a period of 25 years a study has been conducted in which every early morning the beach was being monitored in which now there is a good overview of sea turtle nesting activities.

**There are 4 different sea turtle species that visit Aruba to lay their eggs, each with their own specific season:**

- Leatherback Sea Turtle - Lederschildpad - Driekiel (March – September)
- Loggerhead Sea Turtle - Dikkopschildpad - Cawama (May – September)

- Hawksbill Sea Turtle - Karetsschildpad - Caret (June – December)
- Green Turtle - Soepschildpad - Turtuga Blanco (July-November)

There also came a better understanding and overview of the biggest threats to the sea turtles existence in Aruba and how these problems should be tackled. Despite hard work, all those years, most problems have not really gone away, but luckily and thanks to the enormous efforts from the volunteers, the sea turtles are still here. On Aruba the sea turtles are threatened with extinction by pollution, driving on dunes and beaches with quads and 4x4's and the loss of nesting beaches due to coastal development on behalf of tourism. Because coastal development comes with artificial light and artificial light is a major issue for sea turtles, mother turtle usually comes on shore at night looking for a dark beach to make her nest. However... a dark beach is hard to find here nowadays. Light causes stress and can result in her returning to the sea without laying her eggs. Artificial light causes disorientation for the baby sea turtles (hatchlings).

They crawl towards artificial light sources (like streetlights, hotel lights, etc.) and then they don't find the sea. In the 90's it was still a common occurrence to find a complete nest of about 70 hatchlings on the streets, dead, as cars drove over them. Thanks to their protection methods and a lot of time and effort, the volunteers of Turtugaruba have managed to get this under control. But for a sus-

tainable solution there must be less light visible on the beaches and a strict regulation of it. Sea turtles simply need dark nesting beaches for their survival. It is clear that even more coastal development would not make the situation better for the sea turtles. Again, more hotel rooms? And even busier beaches? These are choices Aruba has to make. Do we want to leave a place for the sea turtles? Not only Aruba, but the entire world needs sea turtles! Sea turtles play a vital role in keeping our oceans healthy.

The Green Turtle, for example, keeps the sea grasses on the bottom of the sea short and therefore a healthy place for many fish to deposit their eggs. The Leatherback, the largest turtle of the world, eats mainly jellyfish and helps maintain the balance between jellyfish and plankton. Despite the threats that exist on Aruba, the turtles still keep coming. That's why today Turtugaruba is especially proud of the volunteers and the many people and organizations of our community that carry a warm place in their hearts for the sea turtles. All four species are active now, which means all hands on deck in the field for us, the volunteers. We strive to keep the sea turtles, our oldest 'repeat guests', always coming back to Aruba and get the chance to reproduce here.

## What you can do to protect the sea turtles

- Lights out for sea turtles.
- Do not drive on beaches.
- Do not litter. Do not leave any plastic cups, straws or bags on the beach.
- Remove obstacles from the beach.
- Do not disturb a nesting sea turtle. Do not attempt to touch the turtle but stay at a respectful distance (at least 10 meters).
- Do call Turtugaruba (24 hour Turtle Hotline: (297) 5929393).

For more information visit the facebook page Turtugaruba Foundation. □



## Fundacion Lanta Papiamento putting spotlight on local authors

ORANJESTAD – Recently, FLP, a foundation dedicated to the promotion and elevation of our national language Papiamento, together with the National Library of Aruba put a spotlight on our local authors and their publications. During the event Tertulia Literario (Literary Gathering) 2022 that took place this month at the National Library in San Nicolas, there was an explosion of literature that attracted a big crowd.

### The authors who were presented and received recognition were:

Olga Buckley, Brandon Bulos, Evert Bongers, Desiree Correa, Richard A. Frank, Lenie Henttu-Jeandor, Ariana Koolman, Eusebio Petrona, Ini Stacia, Ruthy Vrieswijk-Bergen, Arlene M. Wever, Letitia Wever, Oswald Wever and Tyrone Wong, without forgetting the National Library itself, which published three books on its own.

What is interesting is that these authors provided a wide variety of genre and language. There are books for children and adults, fiction and non-fiction; namely three children's books, two young adult novels, three adult novels, one short story, four poetry collections, and five non-fiction works about different subjects.

Most of these are in Papiamento and there is also one work in Dutch and four in English, meaning there was one for every taste. During



the event there were two special presentations, by Ini Stacia who presented and baptized her poetry collection "In the name of love" in a very original way. The other presentation was by Tyrone Wong, who presented his three-volume publication: The Village in San Nicolas, Aruba: Social History during the 20th and 21st Centuries.

FLP thanks the authors, researchers and everyone who contributed to this important yield. Congratulations on the publications.

However, FLP has noticed that there is little promotion of these books on the market. Perhaps there are more books and stories that came out but the foundation is not aware of them. The foundation is committed to helping in this regard. With the Tertulia Literario, which they have been organizing for a few years, they are trying to bring publicity to Aruba's literature. And they propose to begin a custom of gifting books to people, for example, for Christmas this year! □



The foundation adds that there are more productions that also need attention, namely song lyrics in Papiamento which if they are of good quality, fall into the category of poetry. What is very interesting is that, while walking in the supermarket, searching for gifts in other stores and online, the foundation has noticed that more and more local people are using Papiamento in their products. A development which they note with joy. The foundation noted coffee, rum, soaps, creams and fragrances, cards, stationery with Papiamento text, and food products, all with names in Papiamento.

The foundation notes that this should be applauded and they hope that more people will find inspiration to use our beautiful language Papiamento one way or another. "A language is a jewel, a very important cultural heritage, something beautiful that we must protect, develop and present to the world." □

## 330 professionals in the hotel industry received Supercharged Service Training Program 2022 certificate



ORANJESTAD – Last week, minister of Education and Sport, Mr. Endy Croes together with his colleague minister of Health and Tourism, Mr. Dangui Oduber were present at a ceremony during which 330 employees in the hotel industry received their certificate for having taken part in the Supercharged Service Training Program 2022.

The program was organized by Aruba Time Share Association (ATSA) and Caribbean Hotel & Tourism Association (CHTA) Education Foundation, and took place at the Ballroom of the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino.

Employees from different companies and organizations took part in the fourteen days of the program.

Minister Endy Croes gave a speech for the occasion, during which he congratulated the 330 professionals who successfully completed the program, and now can continue promoting Aruba and giving a better service to our guests. The minister also congratulated ATSA, Aruba Tourism Authority, CHTA Education Foundation and partners from different organizations that worked together with each other to make this program possible. □

TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER 2022

## CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS 47 Noble

1 Skin spots gas

6 Orlando

team

11 Writer

Brontë

12 Wear

away

13 Phoning

15 Valuable

rock

16 TV's

Danson

17 Singer

Shannon

18 "The Bourne Identity" star

20 Rubber source

23 Cardiff's land

27 Saudi native

28 New Zealand bird

29 Fix faulty code

31 Common dice roll

32 Tire feature

34 "— a deal!"

37 "That's gross!"

38 Sack

41 Deliberately losing to another boxer

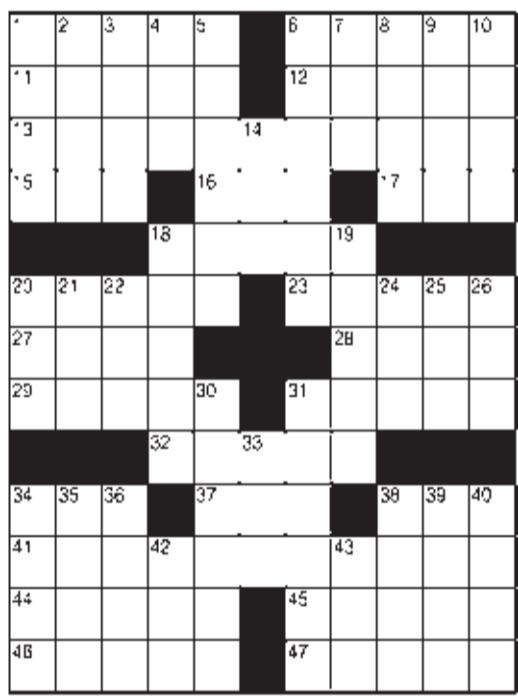
44 Stick

45 Washer cycle

46 Therefore



Yesterday's answer



12-20

AXYDLBAAXR  
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-20

CRYPTOQUOTE

EMQ UZP NXBB Z BMN ZIMQN Z  
CXVTMP IE NKX GZE (T)KX  
KZPHBXT NKVXX NKFPTDT: Z  
VZPFPE HZE. BMTN BQDDZDX.  
ZPH NZPDBXII UKVFTNAZT NVXX  
BFDKNT. — AZEZ ZPDXB MQ

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: LOVE DOES NOT CONSIST IN GAZING AT EACH OTHER, BUT IN LOOKING OUTWARD TOGETHER IN THE SAME DIRECTION. — ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPÉRY

## Not just for kids: Toymakers aim more products at grown-ups



Jamie Cygielman, general manager and president at American Girl, poses behind a showcase of dolls during a press tour, Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Since the pandemic, Elizabeth Hulanick has turned to toys from her childhood to relieve stress.

She and her co-workers chip in to buy Legos at Target and play at their desks. She also started playing with Silly Putty again, noting she felt comforted by the bouncy rubbery stuff that changes colors.

Even her American Girl doll called Samantha, which she keeps in her china cabinet, resonates more these days; she waited one year for her mother to buy her that doll when she was a child and now, she says, it served as a reminder to always be patient.

"(This) probably will be with me forever. I always need something to be tinkering with, and that's probably the safest bet for me to stick with a toy versus keep trying to figure out how to fix cars or something like that," the 37-year-old Piscataway, New Jersey resi-

dent said.

Long before the pandemic, many adults turned to toys from Legos to collectible items to tap into their inner childhood for comfort.

But all the stresses from the health crisis accelerated and solidified the trend, according to Jim Silver, editor-in-chief of TPM, a toy review site.

And even as the pandemic's threat ebbs, toy makers from Mattel's American Girl to Build-a-Bear Workshop Inc. see adults' interest in playthings as long-lasting and are creating new products, services and websites aimed for the older group.

This so-called "kid-adult" market is significant. Ages 18 and older represented 14% of U.S. toy industry sales, or \$5.7 billion for the 12 months ending September 2022.

It grew 19% since the 12 months ending September 2021, according to the NPD Group Inc., a market research firm. □

## Classifieds

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2308/2309

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Dec 2023

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 From eagle and palm beach  
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**Eagle beach**  
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 1 BR WK # 50 room # 316 A  
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 Price :\$ 6000 both  
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**La Cabana Beach and Casino**  
**Eagle beach**  
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 johnnypaesch@gmail.com  
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**Eagle Beach**  
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 24 weeks remain  
 Price : \$15 K  
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**Divi Village Golf**  
**Eagle Beach**  
 1 BR WK # 51 and 52 room #2360  
 31/22 weeks remain  
 Price : \$ 13 K each  
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**ARUBA TODAY**

**How to reach us!**

The map shows the layout of downtown Aruba. Key locations marked include Weststraat, Scheepstraat, Schelpstraat, Clayia G.F. Bellico Cross, Clayia G.J., L.G. Smith Boulevard, Waterfront, Royal Plaza Mall, and High Rise Hotels. A magnifying glass is focused on the area where the ARUBA TODAY and BONDIA buildings are located at the intersection of Weststraat and Scheepstraat.



## HEALTH

### DOCTOR ON DUTY

#### Oranjestad

Hospital 7:00 pm / 10:00pm  
 Tel. 527 4000

#### San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours  
 Tel.524 8833

### PHARMACY ON DUTY

#### Oranjestad:

Santa Cruz Tel. 585 8028

#### San Nicolas:

Aloe Tel. 584 4606

### OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850  
 Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002  
 Urgent Care 586 0448  
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### EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
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## Singh and son finally win PNC as Woods can't make up ground

By DOUG FERGUSON

AP Golf Writer

**ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)** — Vijay Singh and his son finally cashed in on their 16th try at the PNC Championship. For Tiger Woods, he happily settled for another great week with his son in the one tournament where no one has a bad time.

"It was great being with Dad after working so hard to get here—for me school, and him just the injury," 13-year-old Charlie Woods said. "Being out there with a great atmosphere and everyone being out there, it was awesome."

It felt even better for Singh, the three-time major champion who first played the PNC Championship in 2003 when his son, Qass, was 13. Singh all but sealed it with a 6-foot birdie putt for a 59 in the scramble format, becoming the first team in tournament history to post a sub-60 score in both rounds. They finished at 26-under 118 and won by two shots over defending champions John Daly and his son and 2020 winners Justin Thomas and his father. "This is what we wanted forever," Qass said, now 32 and working in insurance. "Sixteen years," his father interjected. "Way



Vijay Singh, right, and his son Qass Singh, left, talk before teeing off the first hole during the first round of the PNC Championship golf tournament Saturday, Dec. 17, 2022, in Orlando, Fla.

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too long, but it's about time," Qass said. "So I'm thrilled. I'm so happy. This is already the best week, so this is just making it ... no words can describe. It's going to be a memory I'm going to have forever."

Woods and his son fell out of contention with a bogey on the par-4 seventh hole when both drove into the woods. They tied for eighth in the 20-team field.

Thomas and his father, Mike, a longtime Kentucky

club professional, looked to be on their way to another title until the birdies dried up on the back nine, and by then Team Singh was on its way to an overdue victory. About the time Little John Daly rolled in an 18-foot eagle putt from off the green for a 59 to reach 24 under, Qass Singh hit the shot of the day with a hybrid on the par-5 14th to about 4 feet for eagle. For Team Woods, their best shots were on Saturday and

put them in the final group and left them hopeful of getting the Willie Park Trophy. On Sunday, Woods hit his approach on the par-5 fifth to 15 feet, and Charlie extended his right fist in celebration upon holing the eagle putt to get within two shots of the lead. But that was as good as it got, at least for the golf. In their third year playing this event, it was the first time Woods allowed his son to join him for interviews,

and the kid delivered.

"I feel like I already knew what he was capable of, and then yesterday, that's the best he's ever played in a while. And that kind of shocked me a little bit," Charlie said as his father tried to contain his laughter. "I used to be good," Woods replied.

Woods mentioned some text messages he received Saturday night after a 3-iron into the 18th hole that referred to "rolling back the clock." Woods has been saying he still has all the shots, it's just a matter of walking. He was in a cart at the PGA Tour Champions-sanctioned event, still limping because of plantar fasciitis in his right foot.

But he has plenty of pop, and he let Justin Thomas know it. Woods ripped one past Thomas, the 29-year-old PGA champion, on the fifth hole. He zoomed up the fairway quickly enough to leave a note next to Thomas' ball that said, "You've got mail."

Thomas was hopeful of the final word if he and his father were to win again. Needling aside, he was impressed with what he saw on certain shots, that drive being one of them. □

## Senga can opt out of Mets deal if 400 IP in next 3 years

By RONALD BLUM

AP Baseball Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Pitcher Kodai Senga can opt out of his contract with the

New York Mets after the 2025 season if he totals at least 400 innings in the next three seasons.

Senga, who is to be intro-



Japan's starter Kodai Senga pitches against Israel during the first inning of a second-round game at the World Baseball Classic in Tokyo, March 15, 2017.

Associated Press

duced at a Citi Field news conference on Monday, gets a \$5 million signing bonus as part of a \$75 million, five-year contract. He receives salaries of \$14 million annually from 2023-27 and can opt out of the deal after the 2025 season if he pitches a total of 400 innings from 2023-25.

There is a \$15 million conditional team option for 2028 that the Mets could exercise if Senga does not opt out and has Tommy John surgery or a right elbow injury that causes him to go on the injured list for more than 130 consecutive days. His salaries through 2027 would escalate by \$2 million for each Cy Young Award won and by \$1 million for finishing second through fifth in the voting.

The escalators would apply to the 2028 option only if the conditions for the option are met.

Senga gets a full no-trade provision through 2025, then can block trades to 10 teams for the remainder of the contract. He cannot be assigned to the minor leagues without his consent, and he will become a free agent when the contract expires.

He would earn a \$100,000 bonus for winning reliever of the year, a \$50,000 bonus for winning a Cy Young, \$25,000 for finishing second in the Cy Young voting and \$10,000 for third. Senga would get \$100,000 for World Series MVP, \$50,000 each for making the All-Star team, winning a Gold Glove or the League

Championship Series MVP. Senga, a hard-throwing right-hander, did not have to go through the posting system with the Japanese big leagues because he has 11 seasons of service time.

Senga, who turns 30 in January, was 11-6 with a 1.94 ERA in 22 starts for the Pacific League's Fukuoka Soft-Bank Hawks last season. He pitched three scoreless innings in two outings to help Japan win a gold medal at the Olympics last year, allowing one hit and striking out six with two walks.

Senga struck out 16 in 11 innings during the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

He permitted one earned run in three games, earning all-tournament team honors. □

# Top NFL teams had lots of close calls in Week 15

By ROB MAADDI  
AP Pro Football Writer

**TAMPA, Fla. (AP)** — Joe Burrow wasn't satisfied after throwing four touchdown passes in the second half to rally the Bengals to a comeback victory over Tom Brady and the Buccaneers. "Not one of my favorites," Burrow said when asked how he felt about Cincinnati's 34-23 victory over Tampa Bay on Sunday. "I mean, it was an exciting game but an ugly one that we were able to pull out and that just goes to show you that teams, like we have, they just find ways to win games. We keep just talking about it and guys just keep stepping up and making big time plays for us." Week 15 was a struggle not only for the Bengals (10-4) but several playoff-bound teams. Only one game Bengals-Buccaneers was decided by more than 10 points, going into the Rams-Packers matchup Monday night. Patrick Mahomes and the Chiefs (11-3) needed overtime to beat the lowly Texans (1-12-1). The Chiefs trailed 21-16 going into the fourth quarter and Harrison Butker missed a 51-yard



Las Vegas Raiders defensive end Chandler Jones (55) runs into the end zone to score on an interception during the second half of an NFL football game between the New England Patriots and Las Vegas Raiders, Sunday, Dec. 18, 2022, in Las Vegas. The Raiders defeated the Patriots 30-24.

field goal in the final minute that would've won it in regulation for Kansas City. But the Chiefs wrapped up their seventh straight AFC West title on Jerick McKinnon's 26-yard TD run in OT. "In today's world, the NFL, you can't go by the record," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said. "Everything is so close, the parity, and you're off by like a finger-

tip catch or maybe a penalty or a turnover. It's just one thing. It's never been where there have been so many close games as there are now that have been determined by one score. The tape tells you the story. You put on the tape. We knew it was going to be a battle. We felt that going in."

Jalen Hurts and Philadel-

phia (13-1) had to overcome a tough first half and three turnovers to beat Chicago 25-20. Hurts ran for three scores on a day he tossed two picks.

"I think it's a testament to how we persevered as a team and how we believed in one another as a team," Hurts said. "And I think the great teams, great players, they find a way."

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The Cowboys (10-4) blew a 17-point lead in the third quarter and lost 40-34 in overtime at Jacksonville. Dallas nearly lost to Houston last week. This time, the Cowboys couldn't put away the surging Jaguars, who now trail first-place Tennessee (7-7) by only a game in the AFC South. Dak Prescott threw two picks in the second half, including a tipped ball Rayshawn Jenkins returned 52 yards for a TD in OT.

The Cowboys may have been looking ahead to facing the Eagles on Christmas Eve but now the loss to Jacksonville all but eliminates Dallas from winning the NFC East.

"You don't overlook any game," Cowboys coach Mike McCarthy said.

On Saturday, Minnesota (11-3) fell behind Indianapolis (4-9-1) 33-0 at halftime before staging the biggest comeback in NFL history to win 39-36 in OT. Baltimore (9-5) fell out of first place in the AFC North with a 13-3 loss to Cleveland (6-8). Buffalo (11-3) held onto the No. 1 seed in the AFC when Tyler Bass kicked a 25-yard field goal as time expired to beat Miami (8-6) 32-29. □

# Ovechkin revels in Messi winning World Cup with Argentina

By STEPHEN WHYNO  
AP Hockey Writer

**ARLINGTON, Va. (AP)** — The happiest professional athlete outside of soccer about Lionel Messi winning the World Cup might be hockey star Alex Ovechkin. A longtime fan of Messi, Ovechkin is reveling in Messi getting the job done with Argentina, including scoring twice and converting his kick in penalties in the instant-classic final against France on Sunday.

"I was very excited," Ovechkin said Monday. "Of course, everybody knows he's my favorite player and to see finally he get his dream and win the World Cup, it's pretty big for him and I'm very happy for him."

Ovechkin got a Messi Barcelona jersey and a trip to

Spain to watch him play there and go behind the scenes as a gift from teammates to celebrate his 1,000th NHL game three years ago. He has met him and taken pictures with him.

There are plenty of parallels between Ovechkin finally hoisting the Stanley Cup with the Washington Capitals in his 13th NHL season and Messi winning the World Cup in likely his last opportunity at age 35. Much like Ovechkin drove the bus on the Capitals' first title run in franchise history and won the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP, Messi was dominant throughout the tournament, becoming the first player to score in group play and each of the knockout rounds.

"Yeah, but I don't know

how he's going to celebrate," Ovechkin said. "That's a different part of the story."

Ovechkin and the Capitals famously went swimming in fountains in Washington and partied with the Cup like few teams have done in recent history. Messi would have to put on quite the show in Buenos Aires to match that feat.

While watching Messi fulfill his dream, Ovechkin is on the verge of making more history in his sport. Last week he became just the third player to reach the 800-goal mark and he is one short of tying and two from passing Gordie Howe for second on the NHL career list.

Ovechkin met Howe, who died in 2016, at the 2009 All-Star Game in Montreal

and has a picture of them in his home autographed by "Mr. Hockey."

"It's probably my top thing in my collection," Ovech-

kin said. "Obviously, Kobe Bryant, Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky's stick, Mario Lemieux's stick, it's probably the top one." □



Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin, center, of Russia, poses with a Messi soccer jersey with Nicklas Backstrom (19), of Sweden, and Brooks Orpik (44) during a ceremony in honor of his 1,000th NHL hockey game, before the team's game against the Nashville Predators on Thursday, April 5, 2018, in Washington.

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